Sexual Healing

March 25, 2014 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I know this may come as a surprise to some folks, but people with HIV/AIDS (even me!) have sex. As a matter of fact, I've heard tell that folks living without the virus also have sex. It's a popular activity—and for good reasons.

Sure, the obvious reason (that it feels good), is, well, obvious. Then there is the procreation reason, which some (or many) folks may argue I should have listed first. I acknowledge that procreation is an often welcome outcome, but I won't obscure the fact that most human sex is not procreative. To deny that is to deny, well, the obvious.

And then there's the heart of the matter, that sex bonds people together. I believe this reason, above all others, explains much of our shared fascination with sex. What it does not explain is our seemingly never-ending difficulties with exploring the topic without trepidation, as a society and as individuals. Religion plays a part, but not the only one.

In this issue, we'll explore sex from a few angles. We won't be sharing tips on how to satisfy your partners, but what you read may wind up pleasing them regardless.

One of the most problematic areas in discussing sex is how to teach sexual education—or if we should at all. To this day, laws exist in several states that require schools to stress the importance of abstinence. Three states—Alabama, South Carolina and Texas—require schools to teach only negative information about homosexuality.

Although sex ed is stuck between science and politics, educators and advocates across the country are struggling to break it free. One of them is on our cover, Jason Villalobos. As a person living with HIV, he brings sex-ed knowledge and personal experience into the classroom as a substitute teacher in Santa Barbara, California. Click here to read more. Then click here to find out how Sapna Mysoor promotes sexual health among Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

Another tricky subject when it comes to sex is HIV risk. What are the odds of getting HIV from fill-in-the-blank circumstance(s) and/or act(s)? Does it really matter what the odds are? Playing the HIV numbers game is less—and more—risky than you think. We drill deep into the data starting here.

When it comes to sex, drama is often not far behind. A love goes unrequited, an HIV diagnosis turns into AIDS, and a love triangle turns everything upside down. All that and more happens in I Loved You More, the new novel by Tom Spanbauer. As a person living with AIDS, the renowned author tells a story of survival. Click here to read our Q&A.

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